

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 28, 2006

The Honorable Bill Frist
Majority Leader
United States Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Frist and Minority Leader Reid:

As the Senate considers the nomination of John M.R. Kneuer for the position of assistant secretary for communications and information of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), we, the members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, urge you to delay his nomination until he and the agency establish a renewed commitment to conducting periodic studies on the state of minority media ownership in the United States, a commitment that has been overlooked for the last six years.

As the Federal Communications Commission returns to the debate of rewriting its rules on media ownership, this is a critical time for lawmakers and regulators to be armed with sound data analysis on minority media ownership. Such data and analysis are necessary if we are to shape policies that both create a dynamic marketplace and serve the public interest. However, under the guidance of Mr. John Kneuer, the NTIA has demonstrated a disturbing lack of interest in this significant issue.

Consider the fact that as recently as this past spring organizations such as the National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ) submitted written letters to the secretary of Commerce denouncing the NTIA's failure to document and track the issues and trends affecting minority ownership. In a letter dated April 27, 2006, Mr. Kneuer, serving as acting assistant secretary for communications and information at the NTIA, responded to NAHJ stating that, "Viewpoint diversity, localism, and competition remain long-held values supporting broadcast regulation in the United States." However, despite an alleged interest in these values, Mr. Kneuer's letter stated that, "Presently, NTIA has no plans to conduct a minority ownership study." Instead of considering a return to a much needed research issue or giving a valid reason for why he is deciding not to continue the study, Mr. Kneuer directed NAHJ to the FCC's ownership reports, which are merely listings of information drawn from FCC licensing—not comprehensive data reports.

We are dismayed that the NTIA has not been more responsive to conducting studies on minority media ownership. It is troubling that the last report was released nearly six years ago, in

Senator Bill Frist and Senator Harry Reid

September 28, 2006


Page 2


December of 2000. If we as Members of Congress and the FCC are to improve diversity in the media industry, the NTIA must be dedicated to being accountable for its actions by responsibly tracking, analyzing, and reporting the impact of its policies (or potential policies) on media ownership. Ultimately, this dedication must stem from an NTIA executive who recognizes the value of diversity and encourages actions to improve diversity shortfalls.

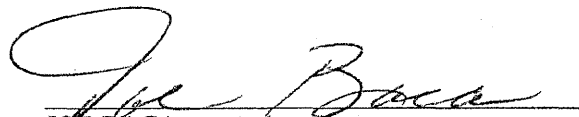
Until Mr. Kneuer and the NTIA commit to conducting studies on minority media ownership on a regular basis, we must ask that the nomination of Mr. Kneuer be delayed.

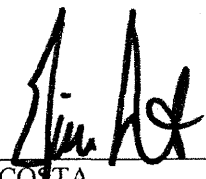
We thank you for your continued leadership and look forward to joining you in support of promoting government accountability, robust competition, and diversity in America's media industry.

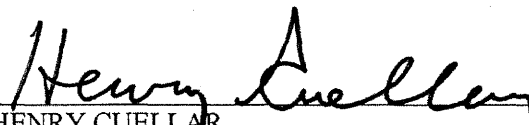
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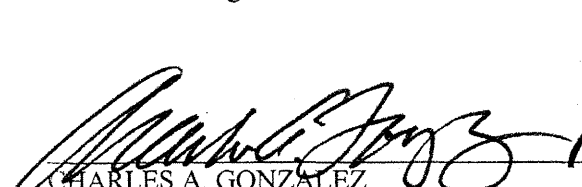

Grace Napolitano
Chairwoman
Congressional Hispanic Caucus

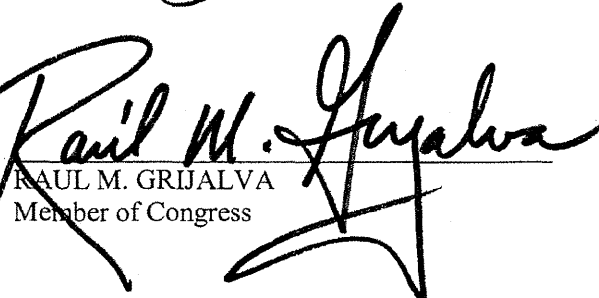

Xavier Becerra
Technology, Communications & Arts Task Force Chair
Congressional Hispanic Caucus



JOE BACA
Member of Congress

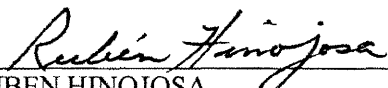

JIM COSTA
Member of Congress



HENRY CUELLAR
Member of Congress



CHARLES A. GONZALEZ
Member of Congress



RAUL M. GRIJALVA
Member of Congress


LUIS V. GUTIERREZ
Member of Congress


RUBEN HINOJOSA
Member of Congress

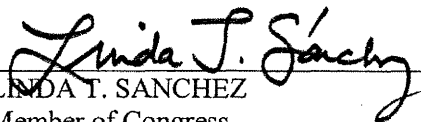

SOLOMON ORTIZ
Member of Congress


ED PASTOR
Member of Congress

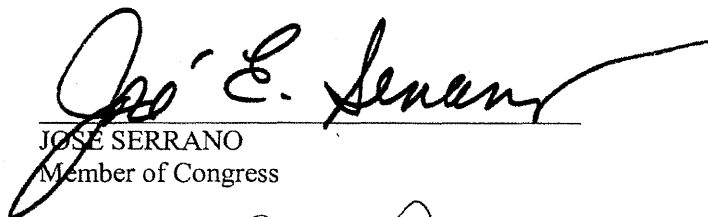

SILVESTRE REYES
Member of Congress

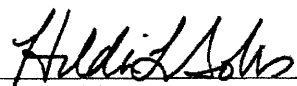

LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD
Member of Congress

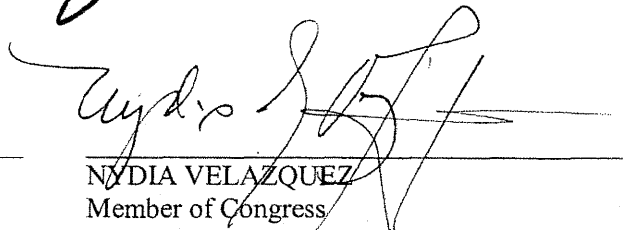

JOHN SALAZAR
Member of Congress

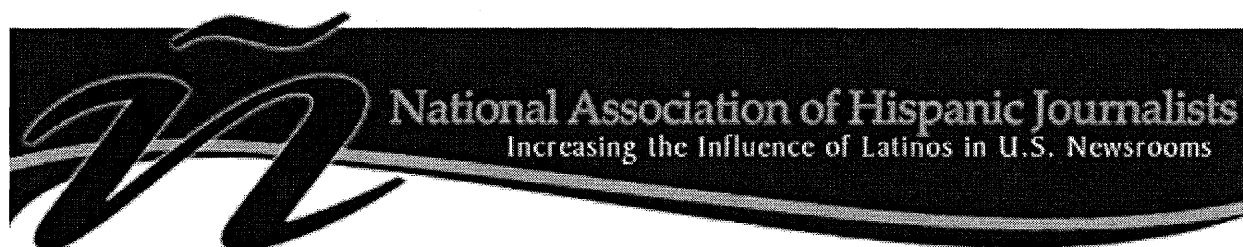

LINDA T. SANCHEZ
Member of Congress


LORETTA SANCHEZ
Member of Congress


JOSE SERRANO
Member of Congress


HILDA SOLIS
Member of Congress


NYDIA VELAZQUEZ
Member of Congress

**Press Release**

May 4, 2006

NAHJ Disappointed that NTIA has No Plans to Conduct Minority Broadcast Ownership Study**Media Contacts: Daniela Montalvo, (202) 662-7152**

Washington, D.C. - The National Association of Hispanic Journalists is disappointed and concerned that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration has no plans to conduct a study on the current state of minority broadcast ownership in the United States.

NAHJ sent a letter to U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez April 3 calling on the department to conduct a minority ownership study. The NTIA, which is an agency within the U.S. Commerce Department, has conducted several studies monitoring trends affecting minority owners. The last report was released at the end of the Clinton Administration.

Responding on behalf of Sec. Gutierrez, NTIA's John M.R. Kneuer informed NAHJ President Veronica Villafañe that his agency had no present plans to conduct a minority ownership study, but that the Administration shared the association's concern that "American media reflect the diversity of the nation's people."

The last report the NTIA published was in December 2000. It found that people of color only made up 3.8 percent of all broadcast station owners and that media consolidation posed a serious threat to the future of minority ownership.

"While we are grateful that the NTIA responded to our letter, we are extremely disappointed that the agency has failed to keep track and document the issues and trends affecting minority ownership," said NAHJ Executive Director Iván Román. "We are concerned that lawmakers and federal regulators have failed to address how to increase minority ownership. Yet, these same lawmakers and regulators are considering measures that will lead to further media consolidation. The future of minority broadcast ownership is in jeopardy and nothing is being done to address this."

NAHJ believes it is critical for the FCC and the public to understand the impact of regulatory action on minority owners. The association is concerned that any action to further deregulate the nation's broadcast ownership regulations will reduce the number of minority owners and diverse news coverage, thus stifling diversity.

- ▶ **Read NAHJ's Letter to Sec. Gutierrez**
- ▶ **Read Response Letter from NTIA**
- ▶ **NTIA's Dec. 2000 study on challenges to minority ownership**
- ▶ **FCC study on barriers to minority ownership**

The National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ)
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Washington, DC 20045-2001 Fax: 202.662.7144
www.nahj.org 1.888.346.NAHJ



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Telecommunications and
Information Administration
Washington, D.C. 20230

APR 27 2006

Ms. Veronica Villafañe
President
National Association of Hispanic Journalists
1000 National Press Building
529 14th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20045-2001

Dear Ms. Villafañe:

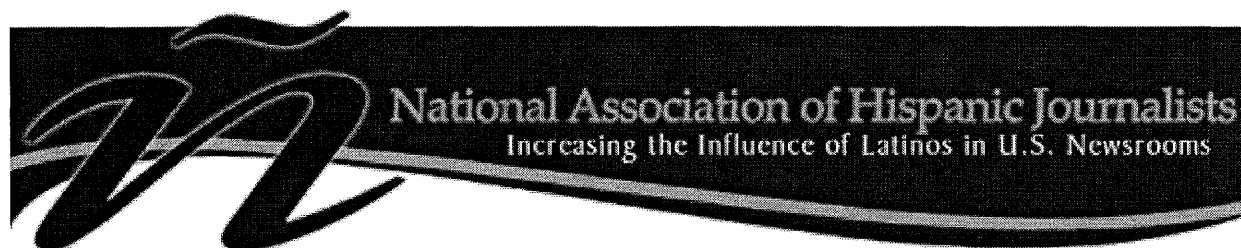
Thank you for your letter to Secretary Gutierrez inquiring about the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA's) plans to conduct a study on minority broadcast ownership. Secretary Gutierrez forwarded your letter and asked me to respond to you directly.

We are pleased that your organization has found NTIA's previous minority commercial broadcast ownership reports valuable and appreciate your view that an updated report may inform the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as it reviews its media ownership rules. Presently, NTIA has no plans to conduct a minority ownership study. You may find of interest, however, data on female and minority broadcast ownership from the Federal Communications Commission's ownership reports filed in calendar year 2003. The data are available on the Commission's website at <http://www.fcc.gov/ownership/data.html>.

The Administration shares your concern that American media reflect the diversity of the nation's people. Viewpoint diversity, localism, and competition remain long-held values supporting broadcast regulation in the United States. Again, thank you for your letter. If you have any further questions, please contact Eric Stark, Associate Administrator for the Office of Policy Analysis and Development at (202)482-1880.

Sincerely,

John M. R. Kneuer
Acting Assistant Secretary for
Communications and Information



April 3, 2006

Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
14th & Constitution Ave. NW, Room 5516
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Gutierrez:

We are writing to inquire whether the National Telecommunications and Information Agency plans to conduct another study on minority broadcast ownership.

In the next few months, the Federal Communications Commission is expected to begin a rulemaking procedure to determine regulations governing our nation's broadcast ownership rules.

We are concerned that any action to further deregulate our nation's broadcast ownership regulations will reduce the number of minority owners.

The NTIA has conducted several valuable studies on minority broadcast ownership in the past. The last report the agency released was in December 2000.

That report, *Changes, Challenges, and Charting New Courses: Minority Commercial Broadcast Ownership in the United States*, found that people of color made up only 3.8 percent of all broadcast station owners. In contrast, people of color currently make up 35 percent of the U.S. population. That figure is expected to increase to 50 percent by 2050.

In addition, the report found that media consolidation posed a serious threat to the future of minority ownership.

NAHJ is concerned that the information from the 2000 study is now outdated and that the percentage of minority owners has since declined.

We urge the NTIA to conduct a new study on the state of minority ownership because it is critical for the public to understand the impact of regulatory action on minority owners.

NAHJ is a membership association of more than 2,000 journalists working in our nation's English and Spanish-language newsrooms.

Founded in 1984, the mission of the association is to increase the number of Latino journalists working in our nation's newsrooms and to improve news coverage of the Latino community.

Sincerely,

Veronica Villafañe
NAHJ President

CC:
Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-Calif.)
Rep. Hilda Solis (D-Calif.)
Rep. Charlie Gonzalez (D-Calif.)
Rep. John Barton (R-Texas)
Rep. John Dingell (R-Mich.)
Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska)
Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii)
Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.)